



Botanical ARTicles

A Publication of the Botanical Artists of Canada

Deborah Marrison elected leader at the first AGM

It is a year since BAC was formed and the first **Annual General Meeting** took place on Wednesday June 13 at the Civic Gardens Centre. The interim steering group presented a draft constitution which was unanimously accepted. Margit Koritar reported a healthy financial state and the reports from the portfolio leaders showed a busy year of workshops, exhibitions and growing membership. BAC is truly underway.

Deborah Marrison was elected chair, Margit Koritar and Louise Chenier were elected treasurer and secretary respectively. Members were asked to volunteer for the different portfolios – and there is always opportunity (and need) for members to become more involved. Minutes will be circulated. BAC has also arranged a number of exciting opportunities for increasing your botanical art knowledge and skills. Check out the calendar for details.

Off to an inspiring start

Art, like morality, consists of drawing the line somewhere" G.K.Chesterton

From small beginnings, with a few of us meeting in one home or another along with a glass of wine, some nibbles, and our paintings to be critiqued by Pamela Stagg, to what the Botanical Artists of Canada is becoming, is indeed exciting. I feel honoured to be representing the group. Thank you for your confidence.

Thanks also to all the people who have worked so hard to bring us to this point - an enormous amount of ground work, a lot of time, and a lot of thought - all of which will make my job much easier!

One of our goals in BAC is to inspire our artists to share our talents with art lovers, botanists and gardeners. So, our work must be shown.

At the end of May an exquisite exhibition "Origins in the Garden," was put on by Lynda Bryden, Hannah Levitt, Peta Lomborg, Emily Luks, Akber Remu, Gerry Jenkison and guest artist from Brazil, Patricia Villela, who is included in the Shirley Sherwood collection. The "Origins" artists have made their homes in Canada from around the world, for which we are truly thankful! We were treated to a magnificent variety of flowers, fruits, vegetables and insects, captured in watercolour, graphite and gouache and colour pencil. The Luks' home in North York is a superb setting for such an exhibition with large, light spaces allowing ample room to display over 100 paintings. Beautiful gardens added to the pleasure. It was indeed a feast for the eyes, and what inspiration!

I believe BAC has huge potential. We provide the opportunity to learn, share, teach, guide, encourage, and inspire. Great workshops and other events are coming, check the calendar, and let's paint!

Have a wonderful summer, and be prepared to share your work at the next critique evening in September, then we can add those finishing touches to our paintings for the Fall Show and Canada Blooms.

- Deborah Marrison

EXHIBITION REPORT

Botanical Artists of Canada (BAC) members took part in *Jump On Spring* at the Civic Garden Centre. Between them, Caroline Dickie, Jean Johnson, Deborah Marrison, Louise Chenier, Alice Durst, Patricia Bermiller, Margaret Graebe, Aliya Ebrahim, Denise Hart, Emily Luks and Leslie Staple produced over 50 paintings.

Congratulations to Aliya, Caroline and Deborah for placing 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the *Orchid show!*

FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

The BAC fall show will be on September 24 to October 21, 2002 at the Civic Garden Centre, opening on September 26. The Upper and Lower Link can hold 60 to 70 paintings. You will receive more details soon, so start your paintings now!

Pricing Paintings © by Pamela Stagg

Some BAC members asked the question, “How can we get higher prices for our work?”

Pricing art is itself an art, especially given that the art market is one of the strangest markets around. Think about it – you have amateurs happy to sell a painting for \$100, competing for sales with professionals who have studio overheads and gallery commissions built into their costs. While there are no hard-and-fast rules for pricing work, here some points to consider.

If you were a brand, what would you be?

Imagine yourself as a car or a suit. Would you want to be a premium brand – a BMW or a Giorgio Armani – or would you be content to be a Kia or a Zellers pantsuit? Decide what your work represents and treat it accordingly. If you want to be a premium brand, show your paintings in appropriate venues and make sure everything about the presentation of your work reflects a quality image. Price your paintings to match your brand image – from the very beginning. You can raise your prices a little each year, but it’s tough to increase your prices 50% all of a sudden.

How can you justify your prices to potential clients?

What credentials can you offer potential clients? Awards, solo shows in public and commercial galleries, and high-profile group shows, all add credibility to your ‘brand name’. Are you making sure that the public only sees your best paintings? For instance, have you destroyed any work lately? It would be wonderful if every painting we completed were a work of art. In reality, there are some that should never see the light of day – even if you’d like just one more painting to round out a show.

Are you willing to wait for sales?

It’s a truism. In order to sell paintings for higher prices, you’ll have to give up low-priced sales and wait for the right buyer. People may tell you your prices are too high. Sometimes the economy may be in recession and expensive art simply won’t sell. Be prepared to wait.

Do you believe in your work?

Putting a high price on your paintings means that you believe in the value of yourself and your work. Whenever you’re tempted to drop your price “just this once”, remind yourself that you’re worth it. αα

LAST CALL

LAST CALL

PLANT FAMILIES SEMINAR – July 13

Richard Dickinson, professor of Botany at U of T

Learn more about the characteristics of your favourite plant families and what you are drawing. Richard will use slides and demonstrations to illustrate his talk.

July 13 2002 from 9 to 4 at the Civic Garden Centre

followed by a painting session on July 14 (optional)

Fee: \$35 payable to BAC

Please send your cheque to Ann Stirling
570 Merton Street, Toronto, Ont M4S 1B3.

Call 416-489-9797 urgently to reserve your space

The History of Botanical Illustration by E. Vitek, B.Sc., MLS

What is Botanical Illustration?

Botanical illustration requires an accurate depiction of a plant for scientific purposes in order to identify a specimen to genus if not species level. The illustration usually includes the leaves and roots; however, flowers, fruits, seeds and cutaways may also be included. Some artists depict the natural surroundings of the plant; this can include the insects and wildlife that cohabit with the plant. The botanical illustration may be made from living or dried specimens but the viewer must be able to tell which was used. Diseased or damaged plants are not usually painted since the illustration is being used for identification purposes. Floral paintings such as those by Monet or Georgia O'Keefe are not considered botanical illustrations; their emphasis is aesthetics, not realism. Floras, which depict the plants of a particular country and field guides series such as Roger Tory Peterson use botanical illustration to identify species.

How does the artist achieve the desired effect?

Currently the preferred medium of botanical artists is watercolour due to its transparent qualities. However gouache, coloured pencil, pen and ink are also very common. Oils and acrylics are less frequently encountered. Most botanical paintings are executed with a white background. This choice is made in order to enhance the three-dimensional quality of the specimen, since objects appear fuller and sit closer on the surface. Excellent exceptions to this type of painting are the works of Margaret Mee and Marianne North; both travelled to exotic locations and incorporated the ecological surroundings in their backgrounds.

How did Botanical Illustration develop?

The first botanical illustration appeared as limestone bas-relief at the great temple of Tutmosis III at Karnak over three thousand years ago. The pomegranate and dragon arum are easily identified.

In the first century Dioscorides produced the first herbal "De Materia Medica" which was not illustrated. It was used as a basis for many other herbals until the renaissance period, which meant that it was copied and recopied by hand on a continual basis for hundreds of years. At one point illustrations were added and they too were copied and recopied. This resulted in plant reproductions being so stylized that they could not be used for identification purposes. However, the Julianna Anicia Codex of Dioscorides (Codex Vindobonensis) from 512 with its excellent watercolour illustrations has been preserved at the Austrian National Library in Vienna.

In 1503 Durer painted "Das Grosse Rasenstück" which was the first ecological painting; using watercolour and gouache Durer portrayed several species of grass in their natural habitat. In the sixteenth century Brunfels' and Fuch's herbals (still based on Dioscorides' work) used woodcuts to illustrate their text. Both Brunfels and Fuch commissioned an artist to paint the plant from nature, a craftsman to transfer the paintings to woodcuts and another to do the cuttings. Close collaboration between the artist and engraver was required, so that the painting would not be altered. Brunfels' herbal signalled the beginning of modern botanical illustration. However, woodcuts lacked the fine detailing effects needed to distinguish one species from another and the implementation of metal plates, which allowed for more accurate portrayal, hastened their decline.

The seventeenth century saw the emergence of travel explorations to all parts of the world, especially North America. Since new species of plants were being brought back to Europe there was a great need to develop accurate reproductions. During this time wealthy individuals had beautiful gardens that grew rare rather than common flowers

They wanted their flowers documented, so they commissioned artists to paint their gardens. Botanical illustration was now a status symbol. The emphasis shifted away from medicinal properties of the plant to aesthetics. During the eighteenth century botanical illustration reached new heights. One of the best-known artists was Redoute (1759-1840) who learned his techniques from the great Dutch painter Spaendonck. While under the patronage of Empress Josephine Bonaparte, Redoute painted his famous "Les Roses" and "Les Liliacees" folios. He also painted a cactus for Marie Antoinette when she was imprisoned during the French Revolution. Redoute's delicately executed paintings radiated his love and passion for flowers. This passion was shared by his wealthy patrons who remunerated him handsomely for his artistic endeavours. During this same period Linnaeus (1707-1778) developed a plant classification system that was based on the sexual characteristics of plants. Linnaeus used Ehret's illustrations (1708-1770) to gain understanding of species so he could classify them accordingly. This classification system affected botanical illustration; an artist did not need to render all parts of the plant on the same print for identification purposes. Times changed; the early eighteenth century saw a decline of patronage. Many talented artists such as Ferdinand Bauer (1760-1826) who travelled extensively in order to record species could not find a patron upon his return from a five-year expedition to Australia and abandoned his projects. His brother, Franz (1758-1840), whose unique artistic talents have rarely been surpassed, became a highly competent botanist who was renowned for his work on orchids. Yet in his lifetime he never received adequate remuneration.

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Interested in flowering plant families?
www.botany.utoronto.ca/courses/BOT307/307/homepage.html

History..cont

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century it was very fashionable for young women to take up gardening and painting in watercolour. Marianne North (1830-1890) travelled extensively in order to paint plants in their natural habitat. When Charles Darwin suggested she travel to Australia and New Zealand, she did. She donated over eight hundred of her paintings and the building to display them, to the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, England.

Plants are still being recorded and discovered in the twentieth century; however scientific documentation now takes a back seat to aesthetics. One of the best-known artists is Margaret Mee (1908-1988). She made fifteen trips to the Amazon jungles to paint orchids.

All were exquisitely rendered, some in their natural habitat. She loved the rain forest and sought to preserve the Amazon long before it became fashionable. She also discovered several new species, which were named after her. Another artist who greatly influenced botanical illustration in this century was Rory McKewen (1932-1982) whose depictions of flowers were rendered in a non-traditional manner

What is currently being done to promote botanical illustration?

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, founded in 1961 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, established an international botanical exhibit to support and encourage botanical artists. It takes place every three years. The last exhibition attracted one hundred and three artworks from seventy-five

artists worldwide. Since 1990 Shirley Sherwood, a private collector, has acquired over four hundred original pieces of work from one hundred and eighty artists, the vast majority women. According to Dr. Sherwood it is still hard to make a living as a self-supporting artist. But in the ten years she has been collecting and exhibiting her collection in museums around the world, Dr Sherwood has noticed a heightened interest to Botanical Art.

The Second Botanical Art Show at Canada Blooms is a national forum to promote public awareness of botanical art as expressed by contemporary Canadian artists. This juried show attracted fifteen artists from across Canada in 2002. αα

Bibliography

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 Stiff, Ruth. *Margaret Mee: a Return to the Amazon*. London: Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, 1996.
 Ben-Ari, Elia T. "Better than a thousand words: botanical artists blend science and aesthetics". *Bioscience* 1999,4: 602-608.

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<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/hort/index.htm>

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Spring Workshop at the Civic Garden Centre

On the weekend of March 15/16, twelve BAC members attended a workshop given by Robin A. Jess. A acclaimed botanical illustrator, Robin was in Toronto as a jury member for the Canada Blooms art show. Robin's special interest is in the New Jersey Pine Barrens, for which she has created a series of forty watercolour illustrations. She is on the Board of Directors of the American Society of Botanical Artists and a member of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators.

We began by watching a 'slide show' of works submitted for Canada Blooms, critiqued by Robin - what an inspiring start to two days of intensive instruction by a very enthusiastic instructor!

Then we studied tulips, concentrating on watercolour techniques and using a #4 brush (!), presentation and composition, and we talked about various materials and methods. We discovered that #4 sable brushes have fine points and can deliver a result similar to the 'zero' brushes. The table looked very Spring-like, we had all taken our choice of tulips. We covered most colours, and by the end of the weekend we had managed to convey most of that colour in our paintings.

Two days was not long enough! We all left the workshop inspired, and hoping that this experience with an international workshop leader could be repeated.

- Deborah Morrison

2002 Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details	Contact
July 8 – 12	Painting in a summer garden with Celia Godkin	\$175. See attached information and registration form.	Celia Godkin 416 591-0491
July 13	Plant Families Workshop Richard Dickinson of the University of Toronto. Intended for those interested in learning more about the plants they paint.	Civic Garden Centre, 9 am to 3 pm. Fee \$35. Bring a packed lunch. This is a seminar, and a follow-up painting session is optional on July 14.	Patricia Bermiller 416-483-3367 patriciabml@aol.com .
Aug 19 - 23	Black & White Halftone / Carbon dust Technique with Prof. Dave Mazierski	BMC Studio, Medical Sciences Building, U of T. 9 – 5. \$250	See attached form
Aug 26 - 30	Illustrating fishes in pen and ink with Prof. Celia Godkin	BMC Studio, Medical Sciences Building, U of T. 9 – 5. \$250	See attached form
September	Critique evening	Details to be announced	
September	A retrospective of Anne Ophelia Todd Dowden's work coinciding with her 95th birthday. Hunt Inst. Pittsburgh	The Hunt Institute will display her sketches, finished paintings and final publications.	Hunt Institute www.huntbot.andrew.cmu.edu BAC members could travel together. Volunteer to coordinate this outing. Email bac@qto.net .
Oct 19 – Nov 2	Sketchbook tour of the Amazon with Emily Luks and Margit Koritar	Once in a lifetime luxury tour for cultural enthusiasts, nature lovers and artists	Emily Luks 416 441-1992 See details below

MONTHLY PAINTING SESSIONS

The last Tuesday of every month	Monthly Painting Sessions – Patricia Bermiller's Studio No session in JUNE.	Hours – 9 AM to 5 PM Fee \$10 per session Capacity – 8 people	If you are interested in painting once a month at a studio with other botanical artists. Patricia Bermiller at 416-483-3367.
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A Sketchbook Tour of the Amazons *October 19 – November 2, 2002*

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Emily Luks and Margit Koritar invite cultural enthusiasts, artists and nature lovers alike for a sketchbook tour of the Amazons. Spend fourteen days and thirteen nights in luxurious accommodations; walk through the Sacred Valley of the Incas; visit the ancient cities of Pisac and Machu Picchu; tour the museums of Cusco and Lima; travel into the pristine heart of the proposed Tambopata National Park. Tambopata's high biodiversity and lack of human inhabitation makes it a perfect place for the intense Amazon experience. Walk on orchid trails where you will see over 140 native and exotic orchids and visit sites famous for the abundance of rare birds that live exclusively in this habitat and are endemic to southern Peru. Throughout your wonderings you will be guided in creating a visual diary, a sketchbook, of photographs and drawings of your journey.

For more details contact:

Emily Luks, Tour Coordinator, 416 441-1992, e-mail: saem@rogers.com
Margit Koritar, Instructor, 705 944-5695, email:
margit@nexicom.net

ILLUSTRATING FISHES IN PEN AND INK

LOCATION: BMC Studio, Room 2357, Medical Sciences Building

DATES: August 26 - 30, 2002

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Celia Godkin

TIMES: 9 am - 5 pm

COST: \$250

COURSE CONTENT: Students will be introduced to the field of natural science illustration, and will be given sufficient scientific information and artistic guidance to enable them to prepare a detailed, scientifically accurate drawing of a fish in pen and ink stipple technique.

MATERIALS: Please bring pencils, eraser, sharpener and tracing paper on the first day of class. Drafting film and technical pens will be required later, but please wait to purchase them until these items have been discussed in class. Basic equipment for mounting fish and fish specimens preserved in alcohol will be supplied.

To register, send this form and a cheque for \$250, payable to the University of Toronto to:

Division of Biomedical Communications, Department of Surgery
Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto
Room 2356, Medical Sciences Bldg.
1 King's College Circle, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1A8

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here.....

PLEASE REGISTER ME FOR THE BMC SUMMER COURSE IN FISH ILLUSTRATION - AUGUST 26-30, 2002

NAME TEL

E-MAIL FAX

ADDRESS

PREVIOUS ART COURSES

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BLACK & WHITE HALFTONE/CARBON DUST TECHNIQUE:

OFFERED THROUGH BIOMEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS (BMC)

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Dave Mazierski

DATE/TIME: Monday – Friday, 9 – 5, August 19 – 23, 2002

LOCATION: BMC Studio, Room 2357, Medical Sciences Building, U of T

COST: \$250, payable to the University of Toronto

CARBON DUST TECHNIQUE is a combination drawing and painting technique which uses carbon pencils to create black and white images of great tonal range. The image is drawn with carbon pencil and tone is applied with a dry brush, dipped in dust made from ground carbon.

SUBJECTS: Shells, bones, skulls, beetles, or you may bring an alternative subject of your choice.

MATERIALS: Please bring HB – 2B pencils, a pencil sharpener, erasers and tracing paper or layout paper on the first day of class, when a detailed materials list will be supplied. Art supplies will cost approximately \$75 - \$100.

REGISTRATION: Fill out the form below and mail to:
Division of Biomedical Communications, Department of Surgery
Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto
Room 2356, Medical Sciences Bldg
1 King's College Circle, Toronto, Ont, M5S 1A8

Don't forget to include a cheque for \$250, made out to BMC, University of Toronto.

PLEASE REGISTER ME FOR THE CARBON DUST COURSE:

AUGUST 19 – 23/02

NAME

PHONE

E - MAIL.....

STREET ADDRESS

CITY POSTAL CODE